

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ
 مُحَمَّدٌ وَآلُهُ وَسَلَّمَ عَلَى رَسُولِ الْكَرِيمِ

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NOTES

From Christianity to Islam.

For Muslims—and for our Christian friends too—there is food for thought in the following excerpts from a letter—but one of many similar letters which we are constantly receiving—of Miss Marguerite Lee, a recent English convert to Islam. Her attention was drawn to the religion of Islam by the short notices which appear in the provincial Press in connection with our annual 'Īd festivals; she wrote to us, was afforded an opportunity of learning about Islam, and has recently embraced that Faith, in her study of which she has been greatly aided by the kindness of Mr. Muhammad Ja'far, M.B.B.S., in presenting her with a copy of the Holy Qur-án, translated by the Maulvie Muhammad 'Alí, M.A., LL.B. After a study of the literature published by our organization side by side with the Qur-án, she has expressed her genuine conviction of the eternal truth of the religion towards which she has felt a magnetic attraction ever since she began to be disgusted with the dogmatic squabbles and ineptitudes which, with sheer fetishism, so effectually envelop the Christianity of to-day. In this, of course, she but represents a very large section of thinking people. Frantic efforts are being made by the leaders of the Church to save the situation. Very recently a book entitled *The Paganism in our Christianity*, by Arthur Weigell, has been

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published by Hutchinsons of London. The book is an indictment of some of the aspects of Christian doctrine and ritual, and shows that it is generally recognized that Christianity as practised to-day is not the Christianity of Jesus Christ, and that if ever it is to be made a living Faith, it must be shorn of all that is extraneous to it and to the teachings of Jesus—an observation which is amply borne out by the stream of literature on the subject and the articles which are flooding the daily Press. Miss Lee's letter is as follows:—

29. 6. 28.

DEAR SIR,—Peace be with you!

I thank you most sincerely for your kind letter which I received a few days ago. . . . It was always my greatest desire to find the true religion and I had fairly good opportunities to read and study. For a long time before I first communicated with you, I felt sure that in Islam I should find what I was seeking. It is because it is my humble desire to be a good Muslim that I am endeavouring to find employment in London. It will enable me to attend the Prayer House, and also I shall be living a more useful life, and many of the sayings of the Prophet denounce idleness and dependence on others. . . . Since receiving the Qur-án, I have been saying three prayers : (1) The *Fajr*, four Raka'at (*sunnat*), the Qur-án gives two Raka'at (*sunnat*) and two in congregation; (2) the *Zuhr*, six Raka'at (*sunnat*); (3) the *'Ishá*, seven Raka'at (*sunnat*).

I also find much pleasure in reading the Qur-án, and I read and study a few chapters of this on Fridays in the place of the Sermon delivered to the congregations. As I study the book and enjoy doing it more and more, I find it difficult to express my appreciation of it. The footnotes explain many things which have hitherto puzzled me, and among these I was specially pleased to read the various notes on the life and death of Jesus Christ. I had never read or heard the true explanation before. At times Christian friends approach me on this subject; very glad and grateful I am to be able to tell them what I have read and believe to be the truth. It is very

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kind of you to offer to send me the book(let) ¹ dealing with prayer. . . .

With much gratitude to you and best wishes,

Yours in Islam,

HALÍMA MARGUERITE LEE.

The Nature of Prophecy and Professor D. B. Macdonald.

Our spiritualist friends, who see much in common with their standpoint in Islam, have repeatedly asked us to enlighten them on the phenomenon of prophecy and its nature, as understood by a Muslim.

Time was—and only a few centuries ago—when a confession of faith in all kinds of fetish-magic and sorcery constituted the woof and warp of the Christian mind and when hundreds of innocent women were burnt as witches. Then came a reaction which manifested itself in the denial of everything which had to do with the spiritual life of man. Even belief in the existence of God was denied. But once again, in the beginning of the nineteenth century, the pendulum was seen swinging towards the reassertion and reaffirmation of a spiritual life; so that to-day Spiritualism is not only an established creed continually gaining adherents from the discontented members of the Church, but counts among its protagonists and supporters eminent scientists and men of literary fame.

The subject of the nature of prophecy is a very abstruse one. We shall therefore confine ourselves to the Qur-ánic verses which deal with it. The most explicit reference to the nature of prophecy we find in chap. xlii. 51, which reads: "And it is not for any mortal that Allah should speak to him except by revelation or from behind a veil or by sending a messenger and revealing by His permission what He pleases, and surely He is High, Wise." This verse, it will be noted, shows how Allah speaks to a person, or makes known His will to him. Three modes are stated: (a) By *Wahy*—a word generally translated as meaning revelation; its primary signi-

¹ The booklet, entitled *Islam and Muslim Prayer*, is now out of print. Will some magnanimous friend come forward to bear the cost of its publication? (ED. I.R.)

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ficance being that of a hasty suggestion; hence the inspired word which enters the hearts of the prophets and of the righteous is called *wahy* or revelation. (b) The second mode of Allah's speaking to His servants is when He speaks from behind a veil, i.e. the words are heard by the person spoken to, as though from behind a veil. A voice is heard, but the utterer or the voice is not seen. (c) The third form of revelation is that in which an apostle, an angel, is chosen by the Almighty to deliver the message to the person to whom He wishes to speak. This is the surest and the clearest form of revelation, and such is the revelation of the Qur-án as recited by the Angel Gabriel to the Holy Prophet. This last-mentioned revelation is only granted to prophets, while the two former may be vouchsafed to the righteous who have not been raised to the dignity of prophethood. It should, however, be borne in mind that, in all these cases, the recipient of the revelation is granted certain peculiar faculties of sense. He observes what others do not observe and he hears words which others do not hear. It is therefore with what may be called spiritual senses that he hears and sees and feels things which others neither hear nor see nor feel.

In connection with the above, the following three points should be noted:—

(a) According to the Qur-án, revelation is a necessity for the spiritual development of mankind and for the rectification of human weaknesses. Human weaknesses can only be remedied by the powerful hand of God, the Almighty. He alone can save us from falling into the pitfalls that beset our spiritual pilgrimage. Further, revelation teaches us that, as external, material things are necessary to complete our physical comfort, so our spiritual comfort cannot be complete without Divine revelation; and that God has been pleased to send such revelation, from time to time, through His prophets.

(b) Revelation is an external, objective thing. There are some that say that revelation is the product of one's own brain, which is provided with special cells. The Qur-án repudiates this view utterly. For example, in the case of Adam we read in the Qur-án: "Then Adam received some words from His Lord,

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so He turned to him mercifully; surely He is oft-returning to mercy, the Merciful. We said: Go forth from this state all, so surely there will come to you guidance from Me, then no fear shall come upon them nor shall they grieve" (ii. 37-38).

Here we find that the weaknesses of Adam were remedied by the Divine revelation. And if Divine revelation had been something which was from within Adam, he could not have remedied his own natural defect? The remedy must come from outside.

This point is especially important and deserves further study. For there are eminent European Orientalists and doctors who, in their efforts to explain the phenomenon of revelation, through the aid of their limited knowledge, confined of necessity to the physical world, assert that the Holy Prophet could "manufacture and manipulate" revelation himself, and that when "he had come out of the state which he had learned to assume, he could give anything as the revelation received therein," and "it is always possible that what he vehemently desired may have seemed to have come to him in that state."¹

There are many incidents which give the direct lie to observations of this nature. We need only take two to elucidate our point. These learned men, simply because they have not been able to comprehend a phenomenon, have tried to explain it away. Now if the Holy Prophet used to imagine himself "to have received in a revelation what he so vehemently desired," how are we to explain and reconcile his awaiting, for instance, the Divine command for the change of the direction of the *Qibla*,² not only for a period of one month, but for no less than sixteen months? There is a verse in the Qur-án which speaks of this. It reads: "The fools among the people will say: What has turned them from their *Qibla* which they had? . . . Indeed We see the turning of your face to heaven, so We shall surely turn you to a *Qibla* which you shall like; turn your face towards the sacred Mosque, and wherever you are, turn your faces towards it. . . ." (ii. 142, 144). These

¹ *The Religious Attitude and Life in Islam*, by Duncan B. Macdonald (Chicago, 1908), pp. 68 and 69.

² The word *Qibla* in its religious usage means the direction towards which a Muslim turns his face when praying.

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verses clearly show that the Prophet waited for a revelation to guide him in this matter. Why did he wait for such a long time, one may pertinently ask, if it was he himself who "manufactured" the revelation, or if it was he who went in and out of the "state of revelation which he had learned to assume"? It is an historical fact that the Holy Prophet used to face towards the holy temple of Jerusalem when he was in Mecca; but on his flight to Medina, while facing Jerusalem he had to turn his back on the Ka'aba in Mecca. The Prophet did not like this; for the Ka'aba was the place dedicated to the worship of God and was rebuilt by his own ancestors, Abraham and Ishmael. He longed for the Ka'aba to be his *Qibla*. But as the prophets preceding Muhammad had Jerusalem for their *Qibla*, the Holy Prophet followed the same custom so long as the revelation did not come. In spite of his intense longing, he did not take any step till he had received the Divine revelation. If the revelation had merely been the result of his own desire, or of something within himself, why should he wait for sixteen months for a revelation from On High? That he could not "manipulate" or "manufacture" for a period of sixteen months is an absurd supposition on the face of it.

There is another incident which would throw yet further light on this point. In chapter lxxx., entitled "He frowned," it is related that a blind man, named Ibn Maktúm, interrupted the Holy Prophet's conversation with the chiefs of the Quraish. The blind man asked to be taught what Allah had revealed to the Holy Prophet. The Holy Prophet took this interruption in bad part, on which he received the following revelation: "He frowned and turned his back because there came to him the blind man. And what would make you know that he would purify himself? Or become reminded so that reminder should profit him? As for him who considers himself free from need of you, to him do you address yourself. And no blame is on you if he would not purify himself. And as to him who comes to you striving hard and he fears, from him you will not divert yourself."

As the verses show, the Prophet did not chide the blind

man. He merely objected to his intrusion. To his questions he gave no answer. Now, if it were left to the option of an individual, he himself would be the last person to give permanence to a rebuke of his own act. However much a man may disapprove of his own conduct, he will never consent to such disapproval being made an incident that should be repeated by his friends and followers. From this we cannot but conclude that the source of the revelation lay outside the heart of the Holy Prophet Muhammad.

(c) Revelation comes only to those who are pure in mind and body. The Holy Qur-án says: "Nor is Allah going to make you acquainted with the unseen, but Allah chooses of His Apostles whom He pleases." His revelation comes only to those who are fit to receive it.

Ibn Khaldūn on the Nature of Revelation.

The above remarks can with advantage be supplemented by the excerpts from the famous *Muqqadima*¹ of the well-known Muslim historian Ibn Khaldūn, who was born at Tunis in A.D. 1332 and entered into the service of 'Abdulláh Ibnu 'l-Ahmar, Sultan of Granada. But he had to leave Spain behind. He lived with statesmen and kings and was an ambassador at the Court of Pedro of Castile and an honoured guest of the mighty Tamerlane. He ended his eventful career as Cadi of Cairo in 1460.

In his section on Prophecy and Vision, he says²:—

"And human souls are of three kinds. First, a kind too weak by nature to attain this degree. These souls are limited to motion in the lower direction, towards sensuous and imaginary apprehensions, and to the combining of ideas from the memory and to the power which forms opinions according to limited rules and specific arrangement. They acquire hereby the sciences, conceptual and affirmative, which belong to the intellect when in the body, and all of which belong to the imagination and are of limited range, since, on the side of its

¹ *Muqqadima* forms the first volume of a huge history entitled *Kitábu 'l-'Ibar*—Book of Examples.

² We borrow the English rendering from Professor D. B. Macdonald, *The Religious Attitude and Life in Islam*, pp. 57-61 (Chicago, 1908).

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beginning, the soul extends to elements only and does not pass beyond them. If it is corrupt, then all beyond these is barred to it. This, for the most part, is the limit of human apprehension in the body; to it the apprehensions of the learned attain, and in it their feet are firm.

“Souls of the second kind set out through that intellectual motion towards the spiritual reason and towards the kind of apprehension which, on account of the equipment therefor which has been made in them, has no need of bodily instruments. The range of their apprehension is wider than the elements which are the range of the primary apprehension belonging to humanity, and they go on freely to internal observations. These are a kind of ecstasy as a whole; they have a limit at their beginning but not at their end. They are the apprehensions of the learned of the saints, the people of the religious sciences and of divine knowledge; they are attained after death by the saved, in the state between death and the resurrection.

“The third kind are created with the power of passing over from humanity, its flesh and its spirit, to the angels of the upper region, so that, for a moment, they become angels actually, and in that moment witness the Heavenly Host in their region, and hear spiritual speech and the divine allocution. These are prophets; God has created for them the power of their momentarily passing over from humanity. And this is the state of inspiration; a constitution on which God has constituted them and a nature in which he has formed them. Through the traits of character which have been combined in them, consisting of the striving and uprightness by which they look towards God, and through the desire which is fixed in their natures for the service of God, unveiled in that looking and making easy its path, He has removed them from the hindrances and entanglements of the body so long as they remain mixed with these through their human nature. So, whenever they wish, they set out for that region by means of that power of transition and that constitution in which they are constituted, not by any acquisition or art.

“Then, when they set out and pass over from their

humanity, and encounter in that Heavenly Host what they encounter, they turn to the channels of physical apprehension with that as a revelation to be sent down by means of these channels, for the sake of transmitting it to creatures. So, at one time one of them a humming sound, as though it were a suggestion of speech, from which he may take the sense which has been brought to him, and the humming sound does not cease until he has retained and understood it. And, at another time, the angel who brings the revelation to him presents himself as a man, and talks to him, and he retains what the angel says. The encountering of the angel, and the return to the channels of physical apprehension, and his understanding what is brought to him, all of that is as though it were a single flash, or less than a glance of the eye. It does not happen in time, but it happens, all of it, together. So it appears as though it were swift, and therefore it is called inspiration (*wahy*) because *wahy*, in Arabic, means 'hastening.'

"Know, further, that the first state—the state of hearing a humming—is the stage of prophets who are not apostles sent with books, as the distinction is made, and the second—the state when an angel appears like a man talking—is the stage of the prophets sent with books, and on that account is more perfect than the first. This is the meaning of the tradition in which the Prophet explained inspiration when he was asked about it. He said: 'At times it comes to me like the ringing of a bell, and that is the most grievous upon me. Then it falls away from me, and I have retained what it said. And at times the angel presents himself to me as a man, and speaks to me; then I retain what he says.' The first of these was more grievous, only because it was the initial step in passing from potentiality to actuality in reaching the spiritual world. So he was under somewhat of a strain. Therefore when he turned, in this state, to the channels of physical apprehension, these limited themselves down to hearing; every other way would have been too hard. But when the inspiration was repeated, and the encountering of the angel occurred often, reaching the spiritual world became easy. So when he turned to the channels of physical apprehension he reached them as a whole,

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and, especially the clearest of them, which is apprehension by sight.

“ Know, too, that in the state of apprehension as a whole, is a general difficulty and grievousness, which the Qur-án has pointed out. God has said, ‘ Lo, We shall cast upon thee a heavy word.’ And ‘A’isha said, ‘ To that which he had to endure from the revelation belonged a great grievousness.’ And she said also, ‘ Inspiration would descend upon him on a day of bitter cold; then it would drop away from him; and his brow would be running with sweat.’ On that account there used to befall him when in that state such unconsciousness, roaring and choking in the throat as is well known. The cause of this was that inspiration, as we have explained, is a separation from the physical nature for the sake of angelic apprehensions, and an encountering of the speech of the soul. So there arises a grievousness from the separation of the self from the self, and its transition from its region to that other region. This is the meaning of the choking which was spoken of as occurring at the beginning of revelation, when he (Muhammad) said, ‘ Then he choked me until pain reached its limit with me; thereupon he let me go, and said, “ Read! ” I said, “ I cannot read,” ’ and so a second and third time, as stands in the tradition.

“ But practice sometimes brings by degrees—first one thing and then another thing—to a measure of ease, in comparison at least with what came earlier. On that account the sections of the Qur-án, both chapters and verses, revealed when he was in Mecca, were shorter than when he was in Al-Madīna. Consider what is handed down as to the revealing of chapter ix., dealing with the raid of Tabūk, how the whole or the greater part of it was revealed while he was travelling upon his camel. At Mecca, on the other hand, there would be revealed to him only a part of a chapter, some very short one, at one time, and the rest would be revealed at another time. Similarly, the last of that which was revealed in Al-Madīna was the ‘ Verse of the Religion ’ (Qur-án, v. 4), and its length is well-known, while at Mecca there used to be revealed very short verses. In that there is a suggestion by which you may distinguish between Meccan and Madīnan chapters and verses.”

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By PROFESSOR 'ABDU 'L-AHAD DÁWÚD, B.D.

III

THE MYSTERY OF THE "MISPA"

IN this article, as the title shows, I shall try to give an exposition of the ancient Hebrew Cult of Stone, which they inherited from Abraham, their great progenitor, and to show that this Stone-Cult was instituted at Mecca by that Patriarch and his son Ishmael; in the land of Canaan by Isaac and Jacob; and in Moab and elsewhere by the other descendants of Abraham.

By the term "Stone-Cult," let it be understood, I do not mean stone-worship, which is idolatry; by it I understand the worship of God at a specially consecrated stone meant for that purpose. In those days of yore, when the chosen family was leading a nomadic and pastoral life, it had no settled habitation where to build a house, especially dedicated to the worship of God; it used to erect a particular stone around which it used to make a *hajj*; that is to say, to turn round seven times in the form of a dancing-ring. The word *hajj* might frighten the Christian readers and they might shrink at its sight because of its Arabic form and because of its being at present a Muslim religious performance. The word *hajj* is exactly identical in meaning and etymology with the same in the Hebrew and other Semitic languages. The Hebrew verb *hagag* is the same as the Arabic *haja*, the difference being only in the pronunciation of the third letter of the Semitic alphabet *gamal*, which the Arabs pronounce as *j*. The Law of Moses uses this very word *hagag* or *haghagh*.¹ when it orders the festival ceremonies to be performed. The word signifies to compass a building, an altar or a stone by running round it at a regular and trained pace with the purpose of performing a religious festival of rejoicing and chanting. In

¹ Unlike the Arabs, both the Hebrew as well as the Aramaic peoples have no *j* sound in their alphabet; their third letter, *gamal*, when hard has *g* sound and when soft or aspirate becomes guttural and sounds *gh*.

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the East the Christians still practise what they call *higga* either during their festival days or at weddings. Consequently, this word has nothing to do with pilgrimage, which is derived from the Italian *pellegrino*, and this also from the Latin *peregrinus*—meaning a “foreigner.”

Abraham during his sojourns frequently used to build an altar for worship and sacrifice at different places and on particular occasions. When Jacob was on his way to Padan Aram and saw the vision of that wonderful ladder, he erected a stone there, upon which he poured oil and called it Bethel, i.e. “the house of God”; and twenty years later he again visited that stone, upon which he poured oil and “pure wine,” [1] as recorded in Genesis xxviii. 10–22; xxxv. A special stone was erected as a monument by Jacob and his father-in-law upon a heap of stones called *Gal'ead* in Hebrew, and *Yaghar sahdutha* by Laban in his Aramaic language, which means “a heap of witness.” But the proper noun they gave to the erected stone was *Mispa* (Gen. xxxi. 45–55), which I prefer to write in its exact Arabic form, *Mispha*, and this I do for the benefit of my Muslim readers.

Now this *Mispha* became later on the most important place of worship, and a centre of the national assemblies in the history of the people of Israel. It was here that Naphthah—a Jewish hero—made a vow “before the Lord,” and after beating the Ammonites, he is supposed to have offered his only daughter as a burnt offering (Judges xi.). It was at *Mispha* that four hundred thousand swordsmen from the eleven tribes of Israel assembled and “swore before the Lord” to exterminate the tribe of Benjamin for an abominable crime committed by the Benjamites of Geba’ and succeeded (Judges xx., xxi.). At *Mispha* all the people were summoned by the Prophet Samuel, where they “swore before the Lord” to destroy all their idols and images, and then were saved from the hands of the Philistines (1 Sam. vii.). It was here that the nation assembled and Saul was appointed king over Israel (1 Sam. x.). In short, every national question of great moment was decided at this *Mispha* or at Bethel. It seems that these shrines were built upon high places or upon a

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raised platform, often called *Ramoth*, which signifies a "high place." Even after the building of the gorgeous Temple of Solomon, the *Misphas* were held in great reverence. But, like the *Ka'aba* at Mecca, these *Misphas* were often filled with idols and images. After the destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple by the Chaldeans, the *Mispha* still maintained its sacred character as late as the time of the Maccabees during the reign of King Antiochus.¹

Now, what does the word *Mispa* mean? It is generally translated into a "watch-tower." It belongs to that class of Semitic nouns—*Asmá Zarf*—which take or derive their name from the thing that they enclose or contain. *Mispa* is the place or building which derives its name from *sāphā*, an archaic word for "stone." The usual word for stone in Hebrew is *iben*, and in Arabic *hajar*. The Syriac for stone is *kipa*. But *safa* or *sapha* seems to be common to them all for some particular object or person when designated as a "stone." Hence the real meaning of *Mispa* is the locality or place in which a *sapha* or stone is set and fixed. It will be seen that when this name, *Mispa*, was first given to the stone erected upon a heap of stone blocks, there was no edifice built around it. It is the spot upon which a *sapha* rests, that is called *Mispa*.

Before explaining the signification of the noun *sapha* I have to tax again the patience of those of my readers who are not acquainted with the Hebrew. The Arabic language lacks the *p* sound in its alphabet just as much as do the Hebrew and other Semitic languages, in which the letter *p*, like *g*, is sometimes soft and is pronounced like *f* or *ph*. In English, as a rule, the Semitic and Greek words containing *f* sound are transliterated and written by the insertion of

¹ The Bible which I consult does not contain the so-called deutro-canonical or Apocryphal books of the Old Testament. This Bible is published by the American Bible Society (New York, 1893). The title runs thus: *Kthabhi Qaddishi Dadiathiqli Wadiathiqli Khadatt An S'had-watha Poushaqa dmin lishani qdimagi. Matba 'ta d'dasta. Biblioneta d'America* [The Holy Books of the Old Testament and of the New Covenant (Testament), with the concordance or witnesses. Trans. from the ancient languages. Published at the Press of the American Bible Society].

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“ph” instead of “f,” e.g. *Seraph*, *Mustapha*, and *Philosophy*. It is in accordance with this rule that I prefer to write this word *sapha* to *safa*.

When Jesus Christ surnamed his first disciple Shim'on (Simon) with the significant title of “Petros” (Peter), he must evidently have had in his mind this ancient sacred *Sapha* which had been lost long ago! But, alas! we cannot positively set out the exact word which he expressed in his own language. The Greek form *Petros* in the masculine gender—*Petra* in the feminine—is so unclassical and un-Greek, that one is astonished at its being ever adopted by the Churches. Did Jesus or any other Jew ever dream of calling the fisherman Bar Yona, *Petros*? Decidedly not. The Syriac version called *Pshitta* has frequently rendered this Greek form into *Kipha* (*Kipa*). And the very fact that even the Greek text has preserved the original name “Kephas,” which the English versions have reproduced in the shape of “Cephas,” shows that Christ spoke the Aramaic language and gave the surname “Kipha” to his principal disciple.

The old Arabic versions of the New Testament have frequently written St. Peter's name as “Sham'un' as-Saphā”; that is to say, “Simon the Stone.” The words of Christ: “Thou art Peter,” etc., have their equivalent in the Arabic version in the form of “Antas-Saphā” (Matt. xvi. 18; John i. 42, etc.).

It follows, therefore, that if Simon be the *Sapha*, the Church which was to be built on it would naturally be the *Mispha*. That Christ should liken Simon to *Sapha* and the Church to *Mispha* is very remarkable; but when I come to divulge the mystery hidden in this similitude and the wisdom embodied in the *Sapha*, then it must be accepted as the most marvellous truth of Muhammad's merit to his glorious title: “THE MUSTAPHA”!

From what has been stated above, our curiosity would naturally lead one to ask the following questions:—

(a) Why did the Muslims and Unitarian descendants of Abraham choose a stone to perform their religious service on or around it? (b) Why should this particular stone be named

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sapha? (c) What is the writer driving at? And so on—perhaps several others.

The stone was selected as the best suitable material upon which a travelling devotee offered his sacrifice, poured his pure oil and wine,¹ and performed his religious services around it. It was more than this; this stone was erected to commemorate the vows and certain promises which a prophet or righteous man made to his Creator, and the revelation he received from God. Consequently, it was a sacred monument to perpetuate the memory and the sacred character of a great religious event. For such a purpose no other material could surpass the stone. Not only does the solidity and durability of the stone make it suitable for that purpose, but its mere simplicity, cheapness, worthlessness in a lonely place would guarantee it against any attraction of human avarice or enmity to steal or destroy it. As is well known, the Law of Moses strictly forbids to hew or carve the stones of the altar. The stone called *Sapha* was to be absolutely left natural; no images, inscriptions, or engravings were to be wrought upon it, lest any one of these should be worshipped in time to come by the ignorant people. Gold, iron, silver, or any other metal, could not answer all these qualities required in the simple stone. It will be understood, therefore, that the *purest*, the *most durable*, *eligible*, and the *safest* material for a religious and sacred monument could be none other than the stone.

The molten bronze statue of the Jupiter worshipped by the heathen Roman Pontifex Maximus, was taken away from the Pantheon and recast into the image of St. Peter by order of a Christian Sovereign Pontiff; and indeed, the wisdom embodied in the *Sapha* is admirable and worthy of all those who worship no other object besides God.

It should also be remembered that not only is the erected *Sapha* a sacred monument, but the very spot and the circuit in which it is situated as well. And it is for this reason that the Muslim *hajj*, like the Hebrew *higga*, is performed round the building where the Sacred Stone is fixed. It is a known fact that the Karamatians who carried the Black Stone from

¹ Wine was not forbidden to the people of Israel.

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the *Ka'aba* and kept it in their own country for some twenty years, were obliged to bring and put it back in its former place because they could not draw the pilgrims from Mecca. If it had been gold or other precious object, it could not have existed, at least, for some five thousand years; or even if it had had on it some carvings or images of art, it would have been destroyed by the Prophet Muhammad himself.

As to the meaning—or rather meanings—of the *Sapha*, I have already referred to them as qualities of the stone.

The word consists of the consonants “sādi” and “pi” ending with the vowel “hi” both as a verb and noun. It means, in its *qal* form, “to purify, to watch, to gaze from distance, and to choose.” It also has the meanings of “to be firm and sound”; in its *pi'el* paradigm, which is causative, it simply means “to make a choice, to cause to elect,” and so on.

A man who watched from a tower was called *Sophi* (2 Kings ix. 17, etc.). In ancient times—that is, before the building of the Temple of Solomon—the Prophet or the “Man of God” was called *Roï* or *Hozî*, which means the “seer” (1 Sam. ix. 9). The Hebrew scholars are, of course, familiar with the word *Msaphpi*, or rather *Msappi*, which is equivalent in orthography to the Arabic *musaphphi*, which signifies “one who endeavours to elect that which is pure, sound, firm,” and so forth. The watchman on the Tower of Yizrael, as quoted above, was gazing and watching sharply from a great distance to distinguish a company of persons coming on towards the town. He saw the first messenger of the King who arrived and joined the group but did not return. The same was the case with the second and the third envoy. It was later on that the *Sophi* could distinguish the chief of the group as Jehu. Now, what then was the business and the office of that watchman? It was to look out sharply from some distance to distinguish one among the others with a view to understanding his identity and his movements, if at all possible, and then to inform his king. If you ask: What was the business and the office of the solitary *Sophi* of the *Mispa*? the answer—which would merely be that he used to watch from the minaret of the *Mispha* (*Mispa*) in order to distinguish the identity of

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the pilgrims in the desert, or that he used to keep watch against some danger—could not satisfy an eager inquirer. If so, the *Mispha* would lose its religious and sacred character, and would rather seem to assume that of a military watch-tower. But the case with the *Sophi* of the *Mispha* was quite different. Originally the *Mispha* was only a simple shrine on a solitary high place in Gal'ead where the *Sophi* with his family or attendants used to live. After the conquest and occupation of the land of Canaan by Israel, the number of the *Misphas* increases, and they soon become great religious centres and develop into institutions of learning and confraternities. They seem to be like the Islamic Mevlevi, Bektashi, Neqshbendi, and other religious confraternities, each one of them being under its own *Sheikh* and *Murshid*. They had schools attached to the *Mispha*, where the Law, the religion, the Hebrew literature and other branches of knowledge were taught. But over and above this educational work, the *Sophi* was the supreme head of a community of initiates whom he used to instruct and teach the esoteric or mystic religion which we know under the name of *Sophia*. Indeed, what we term to-day *Súphees* (*súfees* or *súfis*) were then called *nbiyim* or "prophets," and what is called, in Islamic *takkas*, *zikr* or invocation in prayer, they used to term "prophesying." In the time of the Prophet Samuel, who was the head of the State as well as that of the *Mispha* institutions, these disciples and initiates had become very numerous; and when Saul was anointed and crowned, he joined the *zikr* or religious practice of invocation with the initiates and was announced everywhere: "Behold Saul also among the Prophets." And this saying became a proverb; for he was also "prophesying" with the group of prophets (1 Sam. x. 9-13). The Suphism among the Hebrews continued to be an esoteric religious confraternity under the supremacy of the Prophet of the time until the death of King Solomon. After the division of the kingdom into two, it appears that a great schism had taken place among the *Sophis* too. In the time of the Prophet Elias, about 900 B.C., we are told that he was the only true Prophet left and that all others were

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killed; and that there were eight hundred and fifty prophets of the Baal and Ishra who "ate at the table of Queen Izabel" (1 Kings xviii. 19). But only a few years later, Elias's disciple and successor, the Prophet Elisha, at Bethel and at Jericho is met by scores of the "sons of Prophets" who foretell him about the imminent ascension of his master Elias (2 Kings ii.).

Whatever may have been the real position of the Hebrew *Sophis* (or *Sophees*) after the great religious and national schism, one thing is certain, namely, that the true knowledge of God and the esoteric science of religion was preserved until the appearance of Jesus Christ, who built his Community of the Initiates in the Inner Religion upon Simon the *Sapha*, and that the true *Sophis* or seers of the Christian *Mispha* perpetuated this knowledge and watched over it until the appearance of the Elect of Allah, Muhammad *al-Mustapha*—the Hebrew "Mustaphi"!

The Bible mentions—as I said above—numerous prophets attached to the *Misphas*; but we must well understand that, as the Qur-án clearly declares, "God best knows whom He shall appoint for His Messenger";¹ that He does not bestow the gift of prophecy on a person on account of his nobility, riches, or even piety, but for His own pleasure. The faith and all works of piety, meditations, spiritual exercises, prayers, fasting, and divine knowledge may raise a novice to become a spiritual *murshid* or guide, or to the rank of a saint, but never to the status of a prophet; for prophecy is not procured by effort, but is a gift of God. Even among the Prophets there are only a few who were Apostles or Messengers favoured with a special book and commissioned to direct a certain people or with a particular mission. Therefore the term "prophets" as used in the Hebrew Scriptures is often ambiguous.

I must also remark in this connection that probably the majority of the material of the Bible was the work or production of these *Misphas* before the Babylonian Captivity or even earlier, but afterwards has been revised by

¹ Chapter vi.

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unknown hands until it has taken the shape which we nowadays have.

It now remains to say a few words about the Muslim *Sufism* and the Greek word *Sophia* (wisdom); and a discussion of these two systems of high knowledge does lie outside the scope of this article. Philosophy, in the wider sense of the term, is the study or science of the first principles of being; in other words, it transcends the limits of physics to study the pure being, and leaves behind the study of causes or laws of that which happens or is seen in Nature. It takes the greatest pains to find the truth. The Muslim Sufism is the contemplation on Allah and self, and takes the greatest pains to achieve a union between the two. The superiority of the Islamic *Sophia* to the Greek philosophy is manifest from the object it views at. And it is decidedly superior to the Christian celibacy and monasticism in its indifference towards the consciences and the beliefs of other people. A Muslim *Sophi* (Súfi) always entertains respect for other religions, laughs at the idea of "heresy" and abhors all persecutions and oppressions. Most of the Christian Saints were either persecutors of or the persecuted by heretics, and their celebrity consists in their excess of intolerance. This is, alas, but only too true.

As a secondary remark I should like to add that the Muslim authors have always written the Greek word "philosophy" in the form of *phelsepha* with *sin* instead of *sadi* or *tzadi*, which is one of the constituent letters in the Hebrew and Arabic words *Sapha* and *Sophi*. I think this form was introduced into the Arabic literature by the Assyrian translators who formerly belonged to the Nestorian sect. The Turks write the name St. Sophia of Constantinople with *sadi*, but philosophy with *sin*, like the *samekh* of the Hebrews. I believe that the Greek *Sophia* is to be identified etymologically with the Hebrew word; and the idea that the Muslim word *sophia* (*sowfiya*) is derived from the *soph*, which means "wool," ought to be abandoned.

The true *Sophia*—or wisdom—the true knowledge of God, the true science of religion and morality, and the infallible selection of the Last Apostle of Allah from among all His

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Messengers, belonged to the ancient institution of Israel called *Mispha*, until it was transformed into the *Mispha* of the *Nassara* or Christian. It is indeed marvellous to see how complete is the analogy and how the economy of God concerning His dealings with man is carried on with absolute uniformity and order. The *Mispha* is the filter where all the data and persons are filtered and strained by the *Musaphphi* (Hebrew, *Mosappi*) as by a colander (for such is the meaning of the word); so that the genuine is distinguished and separated from the false, and the pure from the impure; yet centuries succeed each other, myriads of Prophets come and go, still the *Mustapha*, the Elected One, does not appear. Then comes the Holy Jesus; but he is rejected and persecuted, because there existed no longer in Israel that official *Mispha* which would have recognized and announced him as a true Messenger of God who was sent to bear witness to the *Mustapha* that was the Last Prophet to follow him. The "Grand Assembly of the Synagogue" convoked and instituted by Ezra and Nehemiah, the last member of which was "Simeon the Just" (ob. 310 B.C.), was succeeded by the Supreme Tribunal of Jerusalem, called the "Sahedrin"; but this latter Assembly, whose President was the *Nassi* or the "Prince," condemned Jesus to death because it did not recognize his person and the nature of his divine mission. A few *Sophis*, however, knew Jesus and believed in his prophetic mission; but the crowds at one time mistook him for the *Mustapha* or the "elected" Apostle of Allah, and seized and acclaimed him king, but he vanished and disappeared from among them. He was *not* the *Mustapha*, otherwise it would be ridiculous to make Simon the *Sapha* and his Church the *Mispha*; for the office and the duty of the *Mispha* was to *watch* and *look for* the Last Apostle, so that when he came he would be proclaimed as the Elected and Chosen One—the *Mustapha*. If Jesus were the *Mustapha*, there would be no need for the institution of the *Mispha* any longer. This is a very deep and interesting subject; it deserves patient study. Muhammad al-Mustapha is the mystery of the *Mispha*, and the treasure of the *Sophia*.

THE SACRAMENT OF EXTREME UNCTION

THE SACRAMENT OF EXTREME UNCTION

By R. LISSAN

THIS sacrament is recognized in the official teaching of both the Roman and Greek Orthodox Church and used in cases of severe illness or approaching death. Its application and purpose can be described in a few words. In the Roman Church, at the present day, the rite of administration is simple. Apart from one or two short and unessential prayers, which precede and conclude the ceremony, it consists in the anointing of the eyes, ears, nostrils, lips, hands and feet of the sick person, the following formula being repeated at each unction: "Through this holy unction and His own tender mercy, may the Lord pardon thee whatever offences thou hast committed, by sight, by hearing, smell, etc." Formerly, in the case of men, the loins also were anointed, and the Rituals still retain the formula provided, but in practice this is now always omitted. The purpose, as established by the Council of Trent, in its fourteenth session, is declared to be as follows: "The Redeemer of mankind, having provided all spiritual aids for the different emergencies of human life, wished also to guard the close of life by the Sacrament of Extreme Unction, as with a most firm defence." It urges the need of such help, on the ground that, at the hour of death, the assaults of the tempter are redoubled. Hence, Christ, it is stated, instituted this unction as "truly and properly a Sacrament of the New Law." The rite, we are told, was foreshadowed in the anointing of the sick by the Apostles, spoken of in Mark vi. 13, but it was promulgated in James v. 14: "Is any one among you sick? Let him call for the priests of the Church, let them pray over him, anointing him with oil, in the Name of the Lord; and the prayer of faith shall save him that is sick, and the Lord shall raise him up, and if he have committed sins, it shall be forgiven him." In these words are indicated, not only the matter, the form, and the proper ministry of the sacrament, but also its effect.

In the West, only a properly ordained priest can confer

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the sacrament validly, and the oil used must be the *oleum infirmorum* consecrated for this especial purpose by the bishop on Maundy Thursday. If by some mistake a mineral oil should be used, or if one of the two other holy oils, viz. the *chrism* or the *oleum catechumenorum*, should be used, the validity of the ceremony would be doubtful.

In the Eastern Church the principal stress is laid upon bodily healing. The shorter Russian Catechism simply states that the sacrament consists in this, that the sick man is anointed with oil, while grace is prayed for to heal him. But the longer Catechism emphasizes also the spiritual effects, declaring that "though health is not always obtained, nevertheless the forgiveness of sins is always most assuredly thereby received."

In the Western Church, both in present and former practice, the sacrament is administered only to those who are suffering from serious illness. It may be reiterated but not in the same illness, or at any rate until some crisis has intervened.

Among the Greeks and some Oriental sects, the "Sacrament of the Prayer Oil," as they call it, though a much more elaborate ceremony, requiring, when possible, the assistance of seven priests, is often administered in maladies of no gravity, and it is received on certain days of the year by persons of normal health, as a preparation for communion. It is consequently very commonly administered in church, and the forehead, nostrils, cheeks, chin, breast, and both sides of the hands are anointed with a brush or twig, the ceremony being repeated by each priest in turn. The prayer begins as follows: "Holy Father, physician of souls and bodies, Who didst send Thy only begotten Son our Lord Jesus Christ as the healer of every disease and our deliverer from death, heal also Thy servant N. from the spiritual and bodily infirmity that doth hold him, and restore him to life, through Christ, etc." After this, a number of saints are mentioned, including Cosmos and Damian. The oil used is commonly mixed with wine and blessed by the principal priest.

As regards the history of this alleged sacrament, we will trace its pre-Christian and non-Jewish analogues and its evolution as a ceremony.

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From the earliest times and in almost all races is found the application of unguents to the skin and hair, from the Tasmanians to the Greeks and Romans. In the lower races, animal fats are used, but in evolved peoples vegetable oils, balsams, sandal, etc., and sometimes perfumes. Its object was threefold: to give rest after arduous labours, to acquire certain virtues or qualities, or for magico-religious beliefs, etc. ; but it is with the two last that we are concerned—the use of unguents by some tribes as love philtres, etc., to give courage in hunting, such as the application of lion's fat. The doctrine of signatures or correspondences in Nature with sympathetic magic was responsible for the belief that the unguent contained a certain Divine force or vital essence, like what is known in Micronesia as "Mana," part of the "essence of things." By this means the essence was transmitted to the individual, and fat was regarded as a very important seat of life. (Hence the Hindu idea of tabooing animal fat, as sacred.) It was regarded as too sacred to be eaten, and was consequently applied, so the oil of anointing came to be regarded as the vehicle of a sacred or Divine life, either inherent or induced. Hence the sacramental idea is the controlling factor in the idea of anointing; from this sprang the idea of ceremonial religious unction, in sick, physical, magical or religious aspects.

The Australian aborigine, when using his unguent, "sings" his grease into him while rubbing it. The shamans or spiritist sorcerers of Asiatic Russia charm it. It is not a far step from this to the idea of Extreme Unction as a Church rite, and from this idea and ancient practice it has undoubtedly sprung.

The anointing of the dead was a custom in use in Ancient Egypt, Greece and Rome, when they prepared their dead for the last rites. The Egyptians also oiled the head of the mummy, and the Romans poured perfumed oil over the ashes and the tomb. The Greeks placed in the tomb unguents for the use of the dead.

As a ceremonial, application of unguents at puberty to both boys and girls is widespread, especially in Australia and Africa, also at marriage ceremonies, as a preliminary to worship and the consecration of priests and kings, which last is some-

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what rare outside the sphere of Semitic or Hebrew tradition, but well exemplified in Egyptian, Aztec and Hindu literary or monumental history.

The anointing of kings and priests combines several principles and is not to be explained along one line of development. In the first place, it is part of the festal dress, essential to the occasion; secondly, there are the various ideas connected with consecration—the transmission of sanctity, power and new life, on the one hand, and, on the other, the “hedging” of a dedicated person with sacredness, for his protection and the performance of his office.

The Greeks and Romans washed, anointed, and garlanded their sacred stones, and the same is done to-day by the Malays and some East Indian islanders, the idea evidently being a kind of communion with the Deity by anointing the sacred symbol in the elementary stage by conferring sanctity or receiving it.

In its latest developments, anointing passes into a theological metaphor of quasi-doctrinal import. Spiritual unction carries with it from the sacramental to the ethical-religious plane the various gifts of consecration, leaving in its course such traces of mysticism as the “White Ointment of the Tree of Life” found in the baptismal formula of the Ophites, a Gnostic sect.

India in particular is the home of the unguent and anointing, which is done in different social and religious celebrations, by Brahmans and Buddhists alike. Magical unguents are still used as means to procure love and to prevent or cure evil or disease, and are frequently strengthened and assisted by the chanting of mantras which are alleged to give potency. On the dark side of this subject we have the traditional and reputed witch ointments for the devotees of the Dark Powers.

With the Jews, anointing was common in the personal and religious aspects. The kings were anointed, from the earliest times for consecration, and in the case of Jacob pouring oil on the stone at Bethel we have a comparison with the Greek and Roman practice.

On its history, in the Christian aspect, or the claim to be

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instituted by Jesus, Hastings (*Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics*, "Extreme Unction," p. 672) says: "As the anointing of the sick with oil was a primitive form of medical treatment (Isaiah i. 6; Josephus, I. 33. 5; Luke x. 34), and, like all other remedial measures, was peculiarly apt to be associated with religious observances, it is not altogether surprising that the early history of sacramental unction should be somewhat obscure. The existence of a non-sacramental use of consecrated oil is clearly deducible from the epistle of Innocent I, Cæsarius of Arles, etc., the oil being supplied to the sick by themselves or a woman. Another instance is where the Emperor Septimus Severus is cured by the Christian Proculus. About the eighth century the rite of Extreme Unction began to take shape and the term Extreme Unction seems to occur commonly, at a much later date, probably owing its name to its being the *last* unction and taken with the Viaticum (Last Eucharist)."

In the Church declaration that the seven sacraments were instituted by Jesus it is interesting to quote the following from F. W. Puller, *Anointing the Sick*,¹ (London, 1904), p. 251: "It was not, I believe, until twenty-six or twenty-seven years after St. Otto's first preaching in Pomerania (*circa* A.D. 1142) that the theory that there were exactly seven sacraments was devised. During that interval, Gratian's epoch-making book, the *Decretum*, had come out in Bologna, with *no* trace in it of the septenary number of the sacraments. At last, in A.D. 1151, or thereabouts, two important books appeared, one in Rome and one in Paris, both bearing the same title. I refer to the *Sentences* of Cardinal Rolandus (afterwards Pope Alexander III) and the *Sentences* of Peter Lombard. It is not quite clear to me whether Rolandus in his book meant to enumerate *seven* or *eight* sacraments"; he discusses the sacraments at length, and on page 254 makes this important statement: "Whichever view is adopted (eight or seven), *it is clear that this Cardinal, who eight years afterwards became one of the greatest of the Popes, was wholly unconscious, in the year 1151 A.D., of any Apostolical traditions to the effect that Baptism,*

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Confirmation, Eucharist, Penance, Orders, Matrimony and Unction constituted a group of seven mysteries, which alone have the right to be regarded as the true and proper Sacraments of the New Law.

“ For five hundred years the *Sentences* of Peter Lombard held their place as the leading manual of theology in the Latin Church. The greatest of the continental schoolmen, St. Thomas Aquinas, St. Bonaventura, and countless others, chose to put on record their theological teaching by commenting in writing on the ‘ Master of the *Sentences*,’ as Peter Lombard was called. . . . My belief is that he was the first to group these seven (sacraments) together and to exclude all others, and to apply to these seven only the title of sacrament. At the time he published his book, no one could have foreseen that his determination was going to prevail in the way it did (p. 255). His enumeration of the sacraments was merely one among many, all of which differed from him. There was no tradition in favour of his enumeration. It was pure novelty. Nevertheless, the fact that his book became the recognized theological handbook in all the universities, colleges, and monasteries of the Latin Church was the cause of his doctrine about the sacraments and about their number being spread far and wide.”

Four hundred years afterwards, by the Council of Trent, these seven sacraments were defined as being instituted by the Redeemer of mankind.

Truly we have a wonderful Church, but its ways pass human understanding, and Divine also. However, these facts abrogate entirely the alleged establishment by Jesus, and relegates it with the other pious frauds for which the Church is so eminent and famous.

There is one other point. There seems to have been an old custom, out of which has grown the Roman custom of anointing the organs of the senses, of sealing (magically) all the important nerve centres in the body of a dying man lest objectionable entities and intelligences should seize upon the body as the owner left it and use it for the purposes of evil magic. This links it with Baptism, Confirmation, and the

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Eucharist as coming in the category of magical or semi-magical ceremonies, which the Church so rigorously condemned, excepting for its own use.

ISLAM'S ATTITUDE TOWARDS WOMEN AND ORPHANS

By C. A. SOORMA

CHAPTER II

WOMEN IN GREECE

WHEN we turn our attention to early Greece, we find that even there the position of woman was about the same, if not worse. Apart from the glowing pictures painted by Homer and perpetuated by the tragedians, the custom of *selling* daughters in marriage was general. The husbands appear to have indulged largely, and with little or no censure, in concubines. The superiority of man over woman was vehemently asserted on all sides. In the historical age of Greece, the legal position of women had in some respects slightly improved, but their moral condition had undergone a marked deterioration. All virtuous women lived a life of perfect seclusion.

It seems that the Greeks recognized two distinct orders of womanhood. There was, firstly, the wife whose first duty was fidelity to her husband, and secondly, there was the *hetaera* or mistress "who subsisted by her fugitive attachments." The wives, living in seclusion, occupied their time in weaving and spinning and other household duties. They lived in a retired part of the house to which strangers had no access and the wealthier women seldom went abroad and never except when accompanied by a female slave. They never attended any public functions, received no male visitors, except in the presence of their husbands. Lecky says that after the age of Plutarch the position of the virtuous Greek woman was a very low one. She, like her Roman sister was under a perpetual

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tutelage; first of all, to her parents who disposed of her hand, then to her husband, and in the days of her widowhood to her sons. In cases of *inheritance*, her male relatives were preferred to her. According to Westermarck, there also existed a general notion that she was naturally more vicious, more addicted to envy, discontent, evil-speaking and wantonness than the men. Even Plato classed woman together with children and servants, and states generally that in all the pursuits of mankind, the female sex is inferior to the male. Euripides, the great dramatist, puts into the mouth of his Medea the remark that "Women are impotent for good, but clever contrivers of all evil" (Lecky, *op. cit.*, vol. ii. p. 306; Westermarck, *Origin and Development of the Moral Ideas*, vol. i. p. 662).

Contrasted with the virtuous Greek wife was the brilliant and polished courtesan. Learning and education were mostly confined to the *hetaerae*. Prostitution is said to have entered into the religious rites of Cyprus, Biblis, Corinth and Lesbos. Mitylene and Tenedos became notorious for their schools of vice which grew up under the shadow of the temples.

"Gathering around her the most brilliant artists, poets, historians and philosophers, she (i.e. the Greek courtesan) flung herself unreservedly into the intellectual and aesthetic enthusiasms of her time, and soon became the centre of a literary society of matchless splendour. It is said that Aspasia, one of the cleverest and most beautiful courtesans of her time, won the passionate love of Pericles, while Socrates believed himself to be deeply indebted to the instructions of a courtesan named Diotima" (Lecky, *op. cit.*, vol. ii. p. 310).

In Sparta, such women as could not be expected to give birth to healthy children were often destroyed by order of the State, with the result that the proportion of women to men decreased to such an extent that one wife had several husbands. It was also ordered, says Lecky, that the old or infirm husbands should cede their young wives to a stronger man, who could produce vigorous soldiers for the State (Lecky, *op. cit.*, pp. 306-308).

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CHAPTER III

WOMEN IN CHINA AND PERSIA

In China, according to Westermarck, the condition of woman has always been inferior to that of man, and no generous sentiment tending to the amelioration of her social position has ever come from the Chinese sages. Her children must pay her respect, but she in turn owes to her husband the subjection of a child; a wife is an infinitely less important personage than a mother in the Chinese social scale (Westermarck, *op. cit.*, vol. i. p. 647). Perhaps this idea of the inferiority of woman to man is mainly responsible for the cruel Chinese custom of squeezing women's feet in shoes of lead and iron, thereby producing an unnatural deformity in size. I am told that this custom existed so as to disable Chinese women from running away from their homes. This cruel practice has now been abolished in China.

Howard, speaking of the Chinese law relating to divorce, says: "By Chinese law divorce *must* be granted in case of any of the numerous impediments to marriage, or when the wife is guilty of adultery. For that offence the aggrieved husband may kill the offending wife and her paramour, if he catch them *in flagrante delicto*. But should the woman not be slain, she is punished, and the husband may drive her away, or even sell her as a concubine, provided he has not pandered to the crime or does not sell her to the guilty man. Furthermore, a marriage may be dissolved by mutual agreement; and the husband is entitled to a divorce when the wife strikes him, is addicted to drunkenness or opium-smoking, has been defiled before marriage; or when she leaves his house against his will. Besides all these grounds, *established by statute or recent usage*, Confucius allows the husband a divorce for any of the seven faults of the wife: barrenness, wantonness, inattention to parents-in-law, talkativeness, theft, jealousy, and inveterate disease such as leprosy."

It seems that in special circumstances, such as the family growing rich during the marriage or the absence of any relative to receive the wife, if divorced, the above seven reasons would

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not constitute a valid ground for divorce, and the husband has to retain the wife.

"Normally," proceeds Howard, "the wife cannot sue for divorce; still practically she enjoys the right of separation in several important contingencies. Under judicial approval, for instance, she may release herself from the marriage bond in case of three years' desertion without word from her husband. So likewise, when she suffers grave insult from the husband's parents, she may return to her own family, reclaim her dotal gift and demand a contribution for her support" (Howard, *op. cit.*, pp. 235-237).

Formerly, in Japan, woman was regarded more as a chattel than as a human being. But public opinion and education has now raised her status, and she is now called "the honourable lady of the house." The law of divorce in modern Japan is regulated according to the principles of Western law.

Although the *Zoroastrian Yasts* speak of a holy woman as being "rich in good thought, good words, and good deeds, well principled and obedient to her husband," the history of Persia is another example of the depravity of those times. The great reforms of Zoroaster had gone by the board and the morals of Iran had degenerated to an unspeakable extent.

"The climax was reached when Mazdak, in the beginning of the sixth century of the Christian era, bade all men to be partners in riches and *women*, just as they are in fire, water and grass; private property was not to exist; each man was to enjoy or endure the good and bad lots of this world. The lawfulness of marriage with *sisters* and other blood-relations had already been recognized by Mago-Zoroastrianism. The proclamation of this frightful communism revolted some of the nobler minds, even among the Persians. The successor of Zoroaster, as Mazdak styled himself, was put to death; but his doctrines had taken root, and from Persia they spread over the West" (Ameer Ali, *op. cit.*, pp. 9-10).

One has only to read the great Persian poets, Firdausi and Nizami, to realize the moral depravity of ancient Persia before the introduction of Islam. Their writings prove conclusively the great social services rendered by Islam in elevating the status of woman in Iran.

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CHAPTER IV

WOMEN UNDER BUDDHISM

Buddhism, which claims, and perhaps, rightly, to be a high ethical and idealistic order, has not assigned to woman any definite place, nor has it recognized the equality of the sexes. It has done very little towards the exaltation of the position of woman. The life of Gautama Buddhá shows that he could not find in woman a helpmate and a comrade. The mere fact that Buddha could not attain *Nirváná* while in the company of his beautiful wife and surrounded by family ties clearly indicates the inferiority of woman as man's better half and partner in life. What a gulf yawns in this respect between the great Gautama and the Prophet Muhammad! The orphan of Aameena found in his aged wife Khadieja solace and comfort at the most critical moment of his life.

Buddhism teaches asceticism and monasticism. It also lays great stress on celibacy. Buddha succeeded in removing all distinctions of caste which flourished and still flourishes under Brahminism; but he apparently left the question of the relation of the sexes somewhat severely alone. According to Westermarck, "To the Buddhist, women are of all the snares which the tempter has spread for men the most dangerous; in women are embodied all the powers of infatuation which bind the mind of the world" (Westermarck, *op. cit.*, vol. i. p. 662).

According to yet another authority, a very learned jurist in Burmese Buddhist Law, the late U May Oung, "the very idea of wedlock and its attendant worldly life is opposed to the ultimate end of Buddhism—the annihilation of Desire; and notwithstanding that the Buddha, in his discourses to the laity, laid down rules of conduct to be observed by married persons, parents and children, yet he was careful to impress upon his hearers the need for keeping in mind the spiritual life. Thus, while commending him who supports his father, mother, wife and offspring, he at the same time indicates the goal of *Nirváná* the striving for which must necessarily involve celibacy" (May Oung, *Buddhist Law*, Part I, p. 2).

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But even Buddha could not change human nature. His teachings, admittedly highly moral and spiritual, lack that fundamental insight into human nature which a social reformer ought to possess. It is useless for a would-be reformer to speak simply in terms of high idealism and ethics without laying down the law as regards the necessary relationship of the sexes. This is why, although Buddha himself extolled celibacy, we find Buddhists after his death enjoying all the bliss and happiness of matrimony. Had it been otherwise, it is obvious that Buddhism could not have spread so rapidly and extensively as to cover nearly half the world's total population.

Polygamy and concubinage are sanctioned by Buddhist customary law, and no legal restrictions are placed on the number of wives a man might have. In Burma, which is a Buddhist country, the customary law is derived mainly from the laws of Manu, the Rishi, who was a Brahmin. The various *Dhammathats*, the chief of which is the *Manugye*, lay down elaborate rules as regards marriage, divorce, inheritance, etc. Local customs, undoubtedly, have influenced the original character of the Laws of Manu, with the result that in Burma the status of woman is much higher than among the Hindus. But even then up till a few years ago the position of woman was, comparatively speaking, very low. In this connection, the learned author above cited, says: "Many kings of Burma, in their anxiety to preserve dynastic purity, were guilty of practices which would certainly not be tolerated at the present day, and which, even in the days gone by, were confined to the royal family. Thus the union of uncle and niece, nephew and aunt, half-brother and half-sister, was permitted, and in traditionary accounts we even read of a *marriage* between full brother and sister! In the case, however, of marriage with a brother's widow, common in the case of kings and chiefs, officials and others followed their example to a certain extent, and instances have been known at the present day—though rare; on the other hand, marriage with a deceased wife's sister—almost in all cases a younger sister—is considered most proper, the chief reason being that the children will not be

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given a stranger as stepmother. As regards cousins, generally speaking, union with agnates is strongly deprecated, while that with other cognates is not looked upon with disfavour, provided the woman is on the same line as the man or below it. The writer has come across instances of a man *marrying* his deceased wife's mother, and another his deceased son's wife—but such have been very properly looked down upon. No case has arisen in which the validity of a marriage has been questioned on the ground of consanguinity or affinity, and when one does a considerable body of evidence will have to be led to prove prevailing customs" (May Oung, *op. cit.*, Part I, p. 5).

I am glad to admit, however, that with greater female education in Burma, women have made, and are now making; considerable headway. They have always fought for their rights and have obtained them. Thus we see that the laws of divorce, for instance, are just and fair. The husband cannot divorce the wife at will or "by caprice." Divorce by mutual consent is very common. Again, their laws of inheritance are equitable, the women sharing equally with men. In all these respects, as we shall see, the Burmese women are better placed and protected than the Hindu women.

EQUALITY OF MANKIND IN ISLAM

By HAJI ABDUL MAJID

PERHAPS the greatest of life's problems is that of the equality of mankind; since history shows that man's desire to effect this equality has again and again convulsed the world. The French Revolution was a result of the desire of the peasant class to be placed on an *equal* footing with the aristocratic class; present-day Bolshevism was due to the self-same passion for *equality*; and all present and past struggles in conquered countries have also been due to the demand of the subjugated races for *equal* treatment with their conquerors.

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Even the Suffragist Movement of some years back arose from the desire of women to have *equal* rights with men.

If we try to observe things carefully, we cannot help noticing that there must always be some sort of inequality both among individuals and among nations. No man is exactly similar to another in his acquisition and application of knowledge of the things necessary for human life and progress; and the uneven distribution of wealth, which naturally follows as a result of this inequality of knowledge, creates what is known as class—that is, makes some individuals superior to others; while climatic conditions and environment are responsible for the differentiation of nations, making some nations stronger or more advanced than others.

On the other hand, we cannot help noticing that the human being is by nature always struggling for superiority over his fellow-men, so much so that no one can deny feeling some sort of self-satisfaction in finding himself in a better position than others. If we try to supply a motive for this feeling honestly, we find that it is just a desire in us to make others serve us; and, looking at it broadly, it is this desire to become “masters,” as it were, that has prompted nation to conquer nation, that has caused Capital to ignore the rights of Labour, and that has made man tyrannize over woman. At the same time, the conquered nation, Labour, and Woman have precisely the same desire to become “masters”; and so inasmuch as each of us tries to assert his or her superiority over others, the world is a world of incessant struggle.

To add to this confusion, the machinery of life, whether in any one community or in the world as a whole, requires that each individual or nation performs his or its specific part or parts separately, and continues to reward each and every one of them unequally; with the result that wealth becomes so unevenly distributed that the difference between a rich man and a poor man, especially in the West at the present day, is—to use a Malay simile—like “the earth and the sky.” No wonder that of late some Western “great” thinkers should have advanced Socialism and Bolshevism successively as possible remedies for so undesirable a state of things. I

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might mention here also that Hinduism, duly recognizing the necessity for the various and varied functionaries in the machinery of life, established the caste system, each caste or class of men having to perform a special kind of service towards the community as a whole.

Now, let us see what Socialism or Bolshevism or Hinduism means. I, for one, do not hesitate to say that none of the above, or for that matter any other "ism," has fully and satisfactorily solved this great problem of life, the establishment of equality among mankind. "Socialism is an impossibility or an absurdity," a European friend of mine explained in reply to my enquiry as to what he thought of Socialism, "since man when placed on an equal footing with others is apt to refuse to obey orders, whilst in the Government of a State there must be someone in supreme authority to control the reins of State; and it is for that someone to give orders and for the others to carry out those orders; otherwise the State will be in chaos." As to Bolshevism, there is no doubt about it that its non-recognition of private property can only result in killing individual initiative, or else the spirit of emulation which is essential for human progress. And as to Hinduism, if the caste system advanced by that religion is to be the approved system for humanity, it should not have created, as it does, such a mentality among so many classes in India as to make it necessary, according to the explanations of Hindu theologians, to put up innumerable images to enable them to grasp the bare idea of Godhood. A religious system that produces people with such limited vision cannot surely claim to pass muster as a Universal Religion. In any case, it most certainly does not solve the problem of the equality of mankind: for the way in which certain of the classes of Hindus are treated by the Brahmins, the highest class, scarcely suggests that Hinduism admits of any equality in mankind at all.

How does Islam, then, solve this most difficult of life's problems? Before we go into the matter, let us first summarize briefly the position touching the question under review. In the first place, it has to be admitted that the spirit of

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emulation, that desire to be superior to others, is desirable for the sake of human progress. Secondly, it has also to be admitted that for the purpose of working the machinery of life, as it concerns a particular community or the world as a whole, it is necessary to put some persons in authority over others. In other words, the world must remain as a place where positions of authority are offered for human competition, so that human progress can be evolved. That being the case, it necessarily follows that man's reward, which is, of course, represented by wealth, must ever be unevenly distributed.

Islam recognizes all this, and even goes so far as to throw open to competition the position of Khalifa, or Leader in the Muslim world. Indeed, Islamic history has many examples of slaves rising up to this highest position of State. But Islam keeps the balance of authority wisely in that, though it enjoins obedience to those in authority, it also enjoins those in authority to take counsel from those under them before they can pass any law or issue any order. Long before the British had developed their institution of Parliament, Islam had already established the same sort of institution, and in a far better and more workable form.

As regards wealth, Islam does not attempt to disregard the ownership of private property, but in order to make the distribution of wealth more even, it has set up the system of "zakát," whereby the poor man is benefited at the rate of two and a half per cent. per annum whilst, in consequence, the rich man is mulcted in the same ratio. And again, when we consider it seriously, the injunction of the Holy Prophet, "Feed and clothe your servants as you feed and clothe yourselves," is without any doubt at all clearly intended to equalize the distribution of wealth among mankind; for, after all, wealth, in its intrinsic value, is nothing but food and clothing—a view, at any rate, not as cynical as that expressed by Mr. Kipling when he tells us that after seeing all the beautiful visions in his dream, he found at the end of it all only "a piece of stale bread."

A man who rises to the highest power on earth is apt, like

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Pharaoh, to be arrogant, to trample underfoot those who are beneath him and generally to consider himself a very great person ; and so Islam enjoins prayer five times a day, when at the beginning of each prayer, he is reminded by the repetition of the words “ Allah-u-Akbar ”—that Allah is great, and no one else.

A man who renders good service to his fellow-men is apt, like Napoleon, to become conceited or to lose his head when those fellow-men show their gratitude to him and praise him for what he has done ; and so he is brought back to earth in Islam, in the course of his recital of the five daily prayers, by the “ Fatihah,” wherein a verse runs : “ All praise be to Allah, the Lord of the worlds,” and by the “ Tahiyyat ” in which is repeated : “ All my life, my service and my sacrifice are for Allah.”

A man who serves others is prone, like the lower classes of Hindus, to feel small, to be despondent, to cringe, and generally to feel discouraged and hopeless ; and so Islam enjoins that he stand side by side with his master or superiors once in every week in the mosque on Fridays, so that he may regain his manliness and take heart. And indeed, it is to further such encouragement that the Holy Prophet says : “ I am only a man like you.”¹

A man who accumulates wealth is apt, like the fictitious Scrooge of Charles Dickens’s creation, to forget what want and hunger in others is like ; and so Islam enjoins that he should fast for one whole month in every year so that he may be reminded of what it is to be in want and hunger. Nay, Islam goes a step farther and provides a practical understanding of this “ want and hunger ” in others, by making him pay, at the end of the month’s fasting, a bushel of whatever grain it may be that forms his staple food to the poor.

A nation that has conquered and enslaved other nations is apt, like the Spaniards in the time of their ascendancy, to forget that the conquered nations have the right to live and enjoy God’s bounties as much as themselves ; and so Islam enjoins the performance of the pilgrimage to the “ House of

¹ Qur-án, xviii. 110.

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Allah," where all the nations will see each other every year in the same garb—the garb of *ihrám*—as they themselves have, which can hardly fail to engender a spirit of goodwill and comradeship between nation and nation; in fact, we are commanded, whilst on pilgrimage, to observe strict fraternal relations with every nation, and to abstain from disputes, quarrels and evil language one with another.

"What about woman?" you say. Well! Has not Islam made woman the equal of man, when the Holy Prophet says: "Give your wife to eat when you eat and clothe her when you clothe yourself." And again: "Female rights are sacred; see that women are maintained in their rights." It is not generally known perhaps in the West, that a Muslim married woman has the right to own private property as distinct from her husband's, a right that is ordained by Islam. On the other hand, however, Islam does not countenance or attempt to encourage woman to come into the "sphere" of man, for any sane man will admit that it is more womanly to be a Florence Nightingale than a Joan of Arc. It is not in the fitness of things to cut your food with the fork and lift it to your mouth with the knife, though it can be done if you insist on doing it, at the risk, of course, of being ridiculed or of making your knife and fork less serviceable to you. So it is with man and woman. Man is the earner of bread and woman the dispenser thereof; hence the saying of the Holy Prophet: "The wife is ruler in the house"—which is undoubtedly intended to make woman the supreme authority in *her* sphere, leaving man to be the supreme authority in *his* sphere. "O man," says the Holy Qur-án, "fear your Lord Who created you from a single being, and created its mate (woman) *of the same essence*." What greater degree of equality can woman expect to have beyond this outlined by Islam? Unless, indeed, she wishes to be carried back home from the streets, *which is not her place*, and forced to attend to the household duties for the homecoming of her husband, *which is her place*—a conception which was caricatured in one of the London comic papers during the Suffragist Movement some years ago.

THE FAITH OF ABRAHAM

Says Allah : " I have perfected your religion for you and that religion is Islam "—which means peace. And who can deny that Islam can only lead mankind to peace when it simultaneously admits the inequality of mankind, in so far as his acquisition and application of knowledge goes with its resultant reward ; and shows the way to effect equality without impairing in any way the desirable spirit of emulation or ignoring the rights of private ownership ? Indeed, the equality of mankind aimed at by Islam in all its ritual and institutions is equality of opportunities, equality of rights and even equality of wealth—problems that confront the West for urgent solution at the present moment.

" No man is a perfect Muslim unless he wishes for another that which he wishes for himself." That is a saying meant by the Holy Prophet to appeal to man to look upon, deal with, and generally treat his fellow-beings on a basis of perfect equality.

THE FAITH OF ABRAHAM

" O followers of the Book ! why do you dispute about Abraham, when the Torah and the Gospel were not revealed till after him ; do you not then understand ? Behold ! you are they who disputed about that of which you had knowledge ; why then do you dispute about that of which you have no knowledge ? And Allah knows while you do not know. Abraham was not a Jew nor a Christian, but he was (an) upright (man), a Muslim, and he was not one of the polytheists."—*AL-QUR-AN*, iii. 64-66.

WE hold the faith of Abram,
Nor Christian he, nor Jew ;
Long, long e'er Law or Gospel,
He preached Religion true :
That men have souls immortal,
And God's behests fulfil
So be they strive sincerely
To learn and do His Will.

But later scribes enacted
Strict rules of fasts and feasts,
And unclean meats, and Sabbaths,
And off'rings to the priests.

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Forbad each seventh autumn
To sow their fields with wheat,
Forbad to wed with Gentiles,
Or at their tables eat.

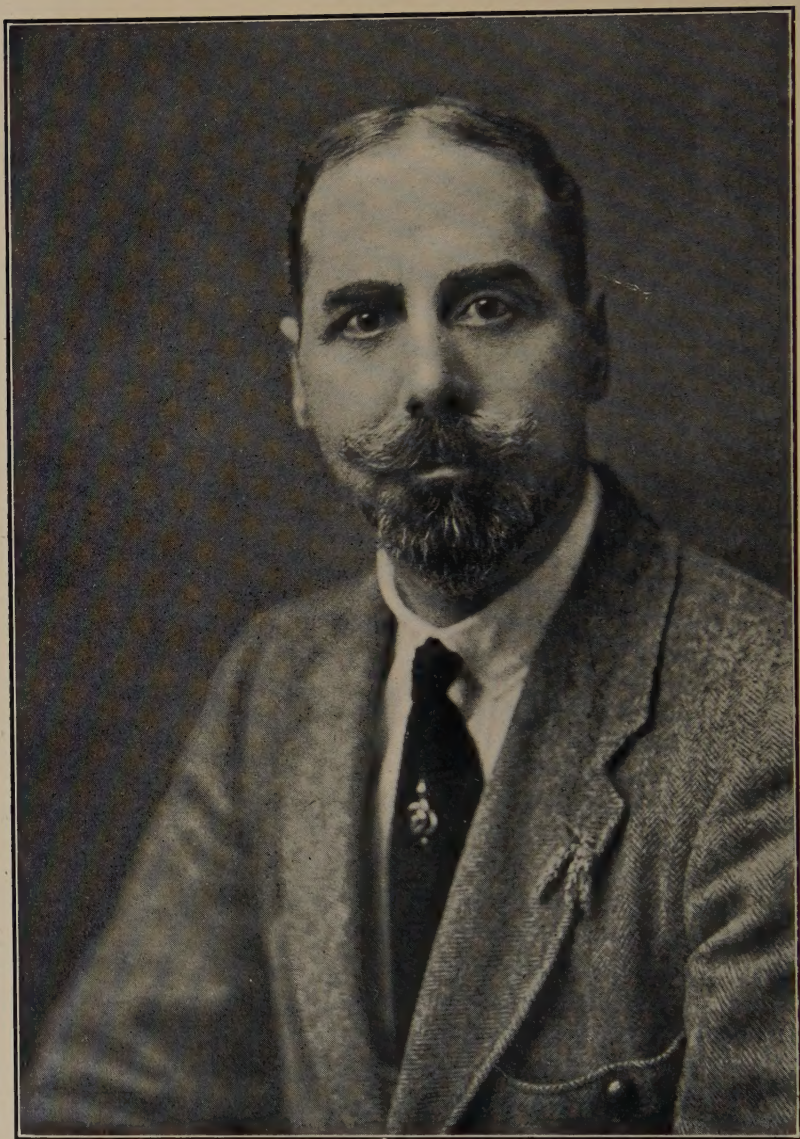
The gentle son of Mary
Recalled God's first commands,
Disproved the Law's Divineness
By dying at its hands;
He spake a beauteous Gospel
Of charity and love,
Goodwill to men around us,
And trust in God above.

Yet heathen myths invaded
The Church which bore his name;
Three Gods for one were worshipped,
For faith profession came.
His words, that aimed from priestcraft
All simple souls to save,
Were used as tyrant's weapons
Men's reason to enslave.

Last Mecca's fervent Prophet
Old Abram's creed restored,
Renounced all human fictions,
Took God alone for Lord.
Then make that creed your motto,
And all mankind invite
To still their sep'rate fancies,
And on that ground unite.

DR. D. TYSSSEN, D.C.L. (London).

Friday Prayer and Sermon.—At the London Muslim Prayer House
—111, Campden Hill Road, Notting Hill Gate, London—every Friday
at 1 p.m. **Sunday Lectures** at 5 p.m. **Qur-án and Arabic**
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Service, Sermon, and Lectures every Sunday at the Mosque, Woking,
at 3.15 p.m. Every Friday at 1 p.m.



"Islam teaches self-reliance without the aid of priesthood, and so helps us to find ourselves. It is that human touch and that self-reliance which is so much needed to-day to cement our civilization and our commercial life, bringing all races together in one great brotherhood in the cause of humanity."

A. VAUGHAN-SPRUCE.
(WORCESTER.)